

Title of paper: Disadvantages and Advantages of the Cohort Model in a Counselor Education Program

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Abstract:

The purpose of our study was to examine the changing perceptions of a cohort of students in a counselor education master's level program. We were interested in understanding the students' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of the cohort model. Also, we wondered how those perceptions might change over time.

We administered a questionnaire to a cohort group of Counselor Education students (n=22) during the fall semesters of 2000, 2001, and 2002. We found that the students demonstrated little knowledge of cohorts at the beginning of the program; by the end (fall 2002) they identified possible benefits of the cohort model. Their responses changed from a self focus to appreciating the collaborative and cooperative feel of a cohesive group. They identified academic, affective, and interpersonal benefits of the model, while also acknowledging the difficulties that are inherent in working closely with others.

We found that the cohort approach in graduate education, specifically counselor education, is a viable and beneficial learning model. Not only do students appear to learn as

much or more than in the traditional approach, they also create a network of support that should become invaluable as they transition into their counseling careers.